Inescapable

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Inescapable

by Metaphysicalash

Summary

(Post-fall AU in which the fall never happens) Instead, the blood loss from Will's stab wounds takes a toll on him. Gaping stab wounds aren't pretty.

Hannibal saves him and escapes to a remote place. A temporary hideout. In the little time they get together, they discover the things they never said to each other. Though Will knows about Hannibal's feelings, it takes him a while to come to terms with his own. Since everything happened so fast. He indulges in a little flirting, just to see how far Hannibal's feelings go.

But trust needs to exist where love is, and it takes a hell lot of it to run away with someone. With the cops after them, Will only has a day to decide if he wants to take a leap of faith, to follow his heart this time.
Because once he takes a chance, there's no turning back.

Notes

I love Hannibal so much and I'm the idiot still waiting for S4.

I know there are too many post-fall fics out there, but I couldn't help myself. It's the only way I can put my fantasies out there, so bear with me.

Thanks to my wonderful beta, @chaotic-inkme on tumblr, for helping me with this. I've taken some liberty with locations and scene descriptions :) Hope you guys like this fic.

Love Crime

Digital art made by me - via my Tumblr - odetolove95 (*The kiss that almost happened)*

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Outlaws.

Will always felt like an outlaw since the beginning, with his gift to step into the minds of criminals, reconstruct a crime scene, and figure out their motives. The vivid imagery always left a lasting impression on his brain. He always felt like the odd one, the round peg in the square hole. It didn't quite bother him, though. If anything bothered him, it would be his nightmares and…

Hannibal Lecter.

Pompously confident and darkly observant.

Tortured, but fair in his judgement,

A predator.

The enigma Will had dug his fingers eagerly into.
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Thanks to him, the two of them were literally outlaws now. Left to rely on no one but each other.

Hannibal was the first person Will ever had intellectual conversations with about the bloody details of the cases he worked on and the architecture of the mind. The nuances of psychology. He would've enjoyed those conversations had Hannibal not driven him up the wall sometimes.

Their relationship could never be put into words. As complex as a labyrinth. The only ones who truly understood their thoughts and feelings were each other. At first, Will thought of him as a friend, then a murderer after he came to know the truth. For a while, he wanted to kill him, but could never bring himself to do it. Despite Hannibal's grisly acts, Will often found himself drawn to him. Maybe because… he understood himself better around him, and somewhere along the line, he had started to become more like him. There was always a layer of enigma to Hannibal that Will truly wanted to understand. Eventually, it all became too much to handle and he gave up on it. He no longer wanted anything to do with him.

Hannibal definitely wanted everything to do with him, though. Why else would he let himself get arrested and make sure he stayed within Will's sights? It was a strange, dark kind of attraction. Or maybe attraction was too weak a word for it.

Love.

Twisted, deranged love, yet real love all the same.

Will had the pleasure of finding that out from dear Bedelia. He knew something was off about Hannibal (something was always off about him but that wasn't the point). Off, as in, he had noticed the hints, the signs of attraction, and brushed them off, thinking he was probably too self-absorbed. In that process, he didn't realize when he'd fallen for him, too. At least, until the night at the cliff house.

That was about—give or take—two days ago.

Most of it was a vivid memory. The first things that popped into his head when he remembered it were the stormy skies and the stains of dark blood. Gaping stab wounds weren't pretty. Despite his soaked, blood-tainted clothes, Will wasn't paying much attention to his injuries.

He wasn't thinking at that moment. Only feeling. Things he never felt before.

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When they took down Dolarhyde together, Will truly connected with Hannibal, in every sense of the word, and once that invisible string bound them together, he couldn't get out of it. Yes, he was in love. He felt it when he wrapped Hannibal in an embrace, and buried his face in his neck. He heard a sigh of satisfaction escape Hannibal's lips, like this was what he wanted all along. He thought of taking a plunge over the cliff, and he almost did, when he coiled an arm around Hannibal's neck.

Then stopped.

He didn't want to. He had once wished to run away with him. He really wanted them to go away together. Somewhere nobody would find them, nobody would bother them.

Now he wished for it again.

They were so dangerously close and he couldn't stop himself from pressing his scarlet lips to Hannibal's and feeling him push back. The metallic taste of blood didn't deter them one bit.

Bleeding profusely from his wounds took a toll on Will, who was barely holding himself up as it was. He staggered, holding onto Hannibal for support, until finally collapsing in his arms. The other clutched him tight as they both dropped to the ground. The one thing that took him by surprise was seeing the veil of stoicism on Hannibal's face fall off and his vulnerability come forth. His brows knitted together and his voice wavered. He felt his strong arm cradling him, and his hand holding his face.

"Will," he heard him say. "Stay with me."

Will wanted to respond, but the lightheadedness didn't let him. He drew in shallow breaths, trying to form words and failing. He didn't know if he was going to survive. Maybe that's fine. However, he didn't want to die without saying the things he always wanted to say to Hannibal.

If only he had a little strength.

Hannibal willed him to stay awake, his voice growing louder and more desperate. His face inches apart.

"Will, look at me," he said. "Stay awake. Don't leave me."

Will's matted, blood-stained curls stuck to his forehead. His eyelids felt heavy. Whatever happened next came in glimpses, through fleeting moments of consciousness, when he fought to stay awake. He could still hear Hannibal's voice, but it sounded distant, like an echo. He felt himself being picked up and carried into the cliff house.

Did they have time?

Maybe some, if they were lucky.

Placing him on the sofa, Hannibal clamped a hand to his own stomach as he rushed into the other room. Will knew he couldn't take him to the hospital, not with Jack and the FBI on his tail. Even with a bullet lodged in his flesh, Hannibal's priority was saving him. The man held too much confidence in himself, and rightfully so, considering how resilient he was. Will knew he would survive. Unlike himself.

Hannibal returned with what looked like bandages and a bottle. Had to be disinfectant. There was a blanket too.

"This will hurt a little," Hannibal said, ripping his shirt open.

Will let out a weak groan at the sting, followed by the burn of the disinfectant, and the pressure when the bandages were clamped on him. Hannibal was taking a risk by helping him. He shouldn't.

"Han…" he breathed.

"Save your strength," Hannibal replied.

"Go…"

"It's too late for that now."

Will shook his head slowly, trying hard to push him away. His own death didn't concern him. He knew the FBI had no intention of sending Lecter back to the asylum. The man would be shot on sight, and that was a risk Will refused to take.

Hannibal's eyes flashed with a spark of determination. "I'm not going to abandon you, Will. And I will not let you die."

For himself, he grabbed one of the bandages and clamped it to his bullet wound, taping it. He draped the blanket over Will, gritting his teeth as he lifted him in his arms. He hurried out of the house and to the cop car he had stolen. Opening the backseat, he carefully placed him inside before hurrying to the front. He grunted as he got in, dumping the first-aid items on the passenger seat.

Will heard the sound of the engine revving. Maybe this would've been a good way to go had he not felt a tinge of regret. He almost had a real chance to be with Hannibal this time, and fate snatched it from him like the cruel thing it was.

"Keep your eyes on me," he heard Hannibal say..

Will had been trying to do just that. He could barely discern Hannibal's dark silhouette in the driver's seat. His mind wandered off to random thoughts, memories, images.

"Stay awake."

He closed his eyes, hearing a faint echo and thinking it was probably his delirious mind playing tricks on him.

Of all the things it could come up with, it had to be the image of Hannibal's office, with the two of them sitting comfortably in armchairs, having one of their sessions. Oddly enough, it was one of Will's brighter memories. Back then, he would've never considered it that way. If he knew then what he did now, he might've seen it differently.

"Will?"

There was a faint screech, a slight jerk, doors opening and closing. A moment later, he felt hands patting his face firmly.

"Will, wake up. Come back to me."

Hannibal's voice sounded much closer now. It was so dark Will couldn't tell if he was awake. All he heard was Hannibal's alarmed voice, and the feel of his warm breath gusting over his face.

"Don't die on me, Will. Not now. Please."

Then there was silence. Still, pitch-black silence, where pain and suffering had ceased. In fact, there was nothing.

After everything that had happened, this was good enough for Will. To not be able to feel anything. This was probably the closest thing to peace he would get.

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To Hannibal, Will's still and lifeless form was anything but peaceful. He hated being powerless, and yet, in front of fate, it was all he felt. His desperate pleas fell on deaf ears.

The bandages would probably stem the bleeding for the time being, but he had to get Will help as soon as possible. He needed to gain some distance before he could help him, though. He scrambled out of the car and over to the front seat again, driving off in a rush.

Hannibal spent a long time chasing Will, yearning to be with him, hoping he would reciprocate his feelings. He did everything in his power to make that happen. It was all he wanted, and Will finally gave in to him like he hoped he would. That brief kiss back there was proof.

Hannibal would be damned if he let death take that away.

He kept glancing at Will through the rearview mirror, lying there, cocooned in the blanket. There had to be some place, anywhere, he could find help. Or supplies.

Driving for ten minutes, he came upon a medical center. Taking Will there was a risky idea. Then again, it was the only way to save his life, especially when the alternative would be to lose him forever. It depended on whether Hannibal was willing to risk it all for him.

His fingers squeezed the wheel as he approached the building, his practical mind warning him against slowing down. *It's not worth getting caught. Will might not even make it anyway.*

His jaw tightened as he wrenched the wheel and headed towards the center. *The hell he won't survive.* He stopped near the building and hurried out, to the backseat, and carefully carried Will out.

In the end, his emotions spoke louder than his reasoning.

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Will awoke two days later on a bed, wrapped warm and snug under a blanket. After the bloodbath that night, he had no clue where he was and how he ended up there. He found himself in a cabin of some sort. His mouth felt dry and his muscles stiff.

The door opened and Hannibal entered, balancing a bowl, cotton, and fresh bandages in his hands.

“Finally,” he said, placing them on the nightstand. “I was getting worried.”

Will’s wound smarted when he tried to sit up, and he groaned. Hannibal helped him, adjusting the pillow so he could rest back. Will eyed the bowl on the tray, filled with steaming soup.

“I remember the last time you brought me that, when I was at the hospital.”

“I remember.” Hannibal sat beside him with the bowl.

“Smells as good as last time.”

Hannibal took a spoonful of soup, blew on it and fed it to him.

“Tastes delicious,” said Will. “No matter where we are, you’ll always find a way to make good food.”

“It’s my forte. Also, I’m mindful of what I put in my stomach.”

“I’ll bet.” Will looked around the room. “Reminds me of home, without my dogs. Where are we?”

“Somewhere remote.”

“Are we still in Baltimore?”

“We are roughly three hours away from there.”

“That’s your idea of a hideout? They’ll hunt us down as long as we're in Maryland.”

“It’s less of a hideout and more of a… pit stop, so to speak. It’s been two days and they still haven’t tracked us. Not out here. Until you get better and regain your strength, we stay here.”

“And after that?”

Hannibal blew on the soup. “You tell me.”

“I think the smarter choice would be to leave me and run.”

“Maybe..”

And yet, when he could be miles away, Hannibal's here with Will, feeding him chicken soup. Hannibal was gentle in his caring, for reasons Will didn’t know yet.

Or maybe he did.

Will half-smiled, leaning back. “Getting soft on me?”

“It wouldn’t be the first.” Hannibal finished feeding him the soup, then kept the bowl on the nightstand. “I need to change your bandages.”

Will stared at him, letting him unbutton his shirt with a delicate intimacy, and part its halves open. He winced when Hannibal removed the bandages, glancing down at the stitches. Hannibal picked up a cotton ball wet with disinfectant and gently cleaned the wound. Will grunted softly, trying to stay still. He struggled to believe how far the man went for him, risking his life to treat him, drive him all the way here, and take care of him. He could’ve easily bailed if he wanted to.The scenes of that night were seared into Will’s brain, as were the sounds of Hannibal’s pleas, willing him to stay awake, refusing to let him die. Regardless of their rocky relationship, Hannibal wouldn’t go that far for just anyone.

To top it all, the man had been shot, but didn’t bring it up once. Didn’t complain about it.

“How’s your injury?” Will asked.

“I’ll be fine,” came the reply.

Will didn’t doubt that. He knew Hannibal was tough and could take care of himself. He’d done it plenty of times, and had escaped the jaws of death. If anything, death probably feared him.

“Thank you,” Will said. “For saving me.”

Hannibal tilted his head. Will could see the pleased lines of his face; that he appreciated the sentiment, at least.

“I intend to keep you by my side. It’s only natural I’d make sure of it.”

In other words, *‘I want to be with you, and I can’t afford to lose you’*.

Will picked up on the meanings easily. His connection with Hannibal was profound enough that he could read between the lines, and the more he learned about him, the more happiness it gave him to learn he had made a monumental impact on Hannibal Lecter—the man who bowed before no one and was not swayed by mercy.

Except by Will.

He had to admit, the time he had paid Hannibal a visit at the asylum to seek his help with taking down Dolarhyde, and had to say ‘please’, he couldn’t help but subtly flirt in the process. It gave him a bit of a thrill to know he alone could sway him. Lecter probably knew what he was up to, and yet, it didn’t stop him from falling for it. When Will drew that close just to say ‘please’, he saw Hannibal’s eyes home in on his lips with a glint of desire, like he wanted to kiss him. The strait-jacket was probably the only thing holding him back.

That moment felt like yesterday. Here they were, on the run with their futures uncertain.

"You patched me up pretty well," Will said. "Considering I was close to death."

"I didn't," Lecter said. "I took you to a medical center. They treated you. Once they were done, I took you from there and brought you here."

"Why did you do that? You could've been caught or worse."

"There's nothing worse than losing the one you love."

Will was at a loss for words. It was one thing finding out Hannibal's feelings from Bedelia. Even with that knowledge, it was still surprising hearing it directly from him.

Hannibal finished cleaning and bandaging his wounds. He kept a fresh change of clothes on the bed.

“I’m going to get a few things for dinner in the evening,” he said. “You can come along if you wish. Tomorrow we can decide where we go from here.”

“Where *we* go from here?” Will asked.

“Your options would be limited if you were to go back to the FBI.”

“I’d go to prison. Again. I doubt anyone would come to get me out. There isn’t much to decide in such circumstances.” Will glanced down at his hands. “Especially considering what I’ve become.”

He wasn’t familiar with the man he was anymore. Everything had changed, and they had gone too far—literally and figuratively—to turn back now. There was no life to go back to, no home, or dogs. He left Molly behind. He left the old Will Graham behind too. Maybe he was the creature Hannibal had always said was inside him.

Perhaps a sliver of him remained, but… it felt different. What he did to Dolarhyde was something he’d never imagined he’d do. He said he wanted to watch the Dragon change Hannibal when, in reality, it was he who changed. Indirectly.

“Do you regret it?” Hannibal’s voice pierced the veil of silence.

“Regret isn’t the word I’d use,” Will replied. “I’m far away from home. Lost the life I once had.”

“You wish you could go back?”

A pause followed. “There’s nothing to go back to.”

Will got off the bed and to his feet, stripping down to his boxers in front of Hannibal without thinking twice. If he was, he’d probably ask him to step outside first. He caught him staring from the corner of his eye. Hannibal didn’t even bother tearing his gaze away, brazenly ogling him with that subtle smile he always gave.

Will went into the bathroom, pointedly avoiding his gaze. His sutures wouldn't let him take a shower, so he settled for running a small towel under the tap. He began cleaning his arm, his neck and collarbone, avoiding the bandage on his shoulder. He struggled to clean his back

without his stitches stinging, wincing as he tried to reach behind. Hannibal appeared at the doorway, clearly unable to get enough of him.

“Need help?” he asked, entering the bathroom.

“Please,” Will replied, handing him the towel.

Hannibal moved up close behind him—*too close*—until Will could feel his breath making the hair rise on the back of his neck. Hannibal ran the towel along his back while his other hand lingered below Will's shoulder blade. Will smirked slightly, seeing his reflection in the mirror. Lecter was deliberately taking his own time with cleaning him, using the excuse to feel his skin. Hannibal took a whiff of him, taking in his sweet, unique scent. To him, it was as heady as any perfume, enough to turn him on. His fingers skimmed down the sides of Will's body, memorizing his curves before slipping to the front and feeling his stomach.

Will’s skin tingled everywhere he touched. The damp towel ran down his back slowly, down, down to the base of his spine before he stopped it there. When he turned his head to face him, their noses almost brushed.

“Thanks,” he said. “I’ll take it from here.”

Hannibal stared at him until Will took the towel and turned back to the mirror. He slowly took his hands away, enamored and bewitched as hell by him. It was as if the man had spun a trap made of gold and Hannibal willingly walked into it.

Will Graham—the only human being who drove him insane.

And like the cunning boy he was, Will led him on, as he did at this moment, depriving him of the opportunity to touch and feel him properly. He wanted to play with him a little, just to see how deep his feelings went. He wanted to see for himself how madly Hannibal loved him, if he really loved him that way.

Hannibal smacked his lips softly before walking out of the bathroom.

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With his hands in the pockets of his bomber jacket, Will looked around at the woods surrounding the cabin, glancing up at the canopy of trees, and then to an old grey Nissan Sentra with a black bumper parked nearby. As the sky darkened, it brought an eerie, ominous atmosphere to the woods. Will felt the dull ache of his injuries overpowered by the biting cold, turning the tip of his nose red and his skin paler than it was. Mist escaped his mouth as he exhaled. On top of that, it drizzled.

How Hannibal managed to find a damn cabin in the woods was beyond him. Then again, the man was resourceful and clever. He’d lived in Florence all that time under a false identity and a pretend wife, so finding a cabin shouldn’t be impossible for him. Of all the places he could take them, he came to… wherever this was in Maryland.

“Where did you get rid of the cop car?” He asked.

“Somewhere that would mislead the police,” Hannibal replied, walking to the Nissan. “This one’s more low profile.”

“Clearly. Is the owner alive?”

Hannibal gave him a furtive glance before getting into the car.

“Right,” Will said, walking to the car and getting in.

***

They drove to the nearest store in a remote town about an hour away. Hannibal had made a mental note of the routes, possible escape points and such, for when the time came. True, he could’ve taken them anywhere, but he couldn’t do that when Will was bleeding out at the back of the car. He had to stop eventually, get them someplace they could rest a bit.

They reached the store, and he pulled over near it.

“Nice place, I suppose,” Will said, getting out of the car. “I wonder what Jack and Alana are conversing at this moment.”

“Whatever it is, I assume it’s frustrating. They didn’t plan on us escaping together. They might assume you wanted to.”

“They wouldn’t be wrong. After all, I lost the chance of running away with you once.”

It gave Hannibal a kind of happiness to see his beloved unraveling his feelings in front of him. He couldn’t have asked for anything more. This right here, the two of them, walking along the streets together, could be one of his best memories, aside from that quiet moment at the Uffizi gallery. Shame that was ruined, but it was water under the bridge.

“I’m surprised you managed to get some money,” Will said.

“I always have backup plans,” Hannibal replied.

“Don’t I know that.”

They went into the store, to aisles of fresh fruits and vegetables. Hannibal kept his head low and kept track of the time he spent, not wanting to linger around anywhere longer than necessary. Will stood by, hands in his jeans pockets, while Hannibal grabbed some shallots, among other necessary items.

“It’s weird we’re grocery shopping while on the run,” Will said. “Pretty sure this town has restaurants.”

“They don’t suit my appetite,” Hannibal replied.

Will drew closer. “And what suits your appetite?”

Hannibal glanced at him, picking up on his flirtatious advances. “My preferences are specific, as you well know. And we’re not alone.”

Will looked around, seeing the store was somewhat empty, save for a few people in the other aisles. Nobody was in their immediate vicinity, at least for the time being. Seizing the window of opportunity, he pressed his lips to Hannibal’s.

Hannibal stilled, his brain firing off like crazy, and his pulse picking up pace. Time seemed to slow down, the imaginary ticking of a clock sounding off in his mind, getting slower, slower. Adrenaline coursed through his veins. Although brief, the kiss was soft, inquisitive, as if Will was testing the waters. Hannibal felt a tinge of disapproval when the contact broke too quickly. He eyed Will’s lips as if expecting him to kiss him again, harder and more ardently this time. It aroused him so strongly he wanted to kiss the hell out of him, possibly do more. A lot more. The man ignited his temptations at the most inappropriate time.

“Wanted to remember what that felt like,” Will said.

Nobody could quite render Hannibal speechless the way he did. He had no clue how to respond.

“We gonna stand here the whole night?” Will asked.

Hannibal tore his gaze away from those spellbinding blue eyes, catching a glimpse of the smile on Will's face as he turned around. Will followed close behind.

Every Breath You Take

“I still think this remote place isn’t one of your better ideas,” Will said.

“It’s not supposed to be,” Hannibal replied, placing the items onto the checkout counter. “Like I said, pit stop.”

“So, we leave tomorrow?”

“If that’s what you decide.”

“This all seems weirdly normal considering we just… you know, ran away.”

“It is the whole point of keeping a low profile, and keeping away attention.”

“Blending in. Something I’ve never been good at.”

“The fact you stand apart from everyone else is exactly why I find you interesting, Will.”

Will sniggered. “I’ll be outside.”

He walked out of the store and towards the parking lot. It was quite dark, illuminated by the orange glow of a few street lights.

‘If that’s what you decide.’

Will had no clue what to respond to that, especially considering he never expected to survive the fight with Dolarhyde in the first place. He expected Hannibal to have decided everything and planned ahead, knowing the man he was. He didn’t think Hannibal would stay if he stayed.

No. The man probably wanted to know what Will's answer was. He wanted to know if he would actually run away with him.

Will let out a slow sigh. In the short distance, he spotted a hooded man with what looked like a switchblade in his hand, discreetly following a woman walking to her car before clasping her mouth with his hand from behind. Will's instincts kicked in and he hurried towards them without a second thought.

He sprinted towards the man, and on reaching him, grabbed him by the neck with one arm and yanked him away. The woman gasped and shot a wide-eyed glance at the hooded man.

“Go!” Will exclaimed to her.

She hurried away. Will grunted as the hooded man put up a fight, and the effort to restrain him put a strain on Will's injuries. The man elbowed him in the ribs, and once Will's grip loosened, he shoved him against a car nearby. He tried to jab him, but Will stopped the blade inches away from his stomach. He kicked the man's knee, then wrenched his wrist, forcing him to drop the switchblade. Even without it, the attacker put up a hell of a fight, punching Will in the face right where Dolarhyde had stabbed him.

Will yelped, an excruciating pain piercing through his face, stunning him for a moment. He didn't register the second punch to his other cheek, or the knee ramming into his gut, knocking the air out of his lungs. Will's injuries hindered his ability to fight, the pain almost paralyzing him. Despite that, and his face practically burning, he refused to give up.

The hooded assailant pulled his fist back for another punch. And was stopped by Hannibal.

Hannibal's hand covered the man's fist, his eyes darkening with a silent fury. For that moment, Will thought he was looking at the devil incarnate. With a sudden effort, Hannibal broke the man's wrist, eliciting a loud cry of agony from him that echoed across the parking lot.

The man sank to his knees, struggling to break free of Hannibal's iron grip. But Hannibal wasn't done yet. He went further and fractured the man's forearm, ignoring his screams and pleas to let go. A few people who had arrived at the store turned to look their way. Will glanced at them. The last thing they needed was for this to reach the police.

"I think that's enough," he said.

Consumed by his paroxysm of anger, Hannibal didn't hear him. His grip on the man tightened so much it trembled, threatening to break the rest of his arm.

Will knew he needed a bit of persuasion. He caught Hannibal's wrist. "That's enough. I'm alright." Then lowered his voice. "Please."

It was quite unbelievable how one word was all it took. Hannibal tore his gaze away from the man and looked at Will, the darkness fading from his eyes. At that proximity, he could hardly ignore Will.

"What is your name?" he asked the man.

"Wh—"

Hannibal bent his broken wrist a little, enough to send a jolt of pain rushing through the man's arm.

"Ah!" the man cried. "Michael!"

"Full name," Hannibal said, coldly.

"Benson! Michael Benson!"

Hannibal let go of him, and the man stumbled away, clutching his arm and whimpering.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Hannibal asked.

“Yeah.” Will winced from the pain. “Nothing I haven’t faced before. Why’d you ask his name?”

Hannibal dismissed the question and tilted his head, eyeing the bandage on his face. “We need to make sure the stitches haven’t torn. We need to get back.”

“Yes, we do. We’ve attracted enough attention.”

“Tell yourself that,” Hannibal’s voice sounded blunt. “I think it was quite stupid of you to intervene.”

“She was in trouble. Didn’t feel right to just stand by.”

“Might I remind you we are fugitives.”

“Yeah, whose fault is that?”

Will immediately regretted saying that. Though a part of him still felt Hannibal should’ve left him at that cliff. Saving him was a conscious choice on Lecter’s part.

“Sorry,” he said.

“Doesn’t matter,” Hannibal replied. “Neither of us can truly blame the other. We each played our part.” He raised a hand outwards. “After you.”

Everything felt like a bizarre dream to Will. He couldn’t believe any of this was happening.

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On returning to the cabin, Hannibal handed the bag of groceries to him.

“I just realized I forgot something,” he said. “I’ll be back.”

Will raised a brow. “Where are you going?”

“Back to the store. Stay in the cabin. I don’t want you to get into trouble.”

He left before Will could say another word.

Will went inside, placing the groceries onto the kitchen counter before heading to the bathroom to get dressed. Thankfully, despite the pain, his sutures remained mostly intact. There was a bit of bleeding, but not too severe. He used the first-aid to clean and put on fresh bandages. Then freshened up.

Waiting for Hannibal to return, he sat on the sofa, left alone to his thoughts, which was never a good idea. It was like he’d told Hannibal once— *‘My thoughts are not tasty’*.

Even now, he was plagued by thoughts of Jack, Alana, Molly, and his home. The world he used to know. Perhaps it seemed much simpler when he was just doing his job, working for

the FBI. Life did a one-eighty after Lecter showed up. It had become no less than a roller coaster, rising and plunging. Who would've ever thought the Chesapeake Ripper, the one who had been covering his tracks pretty well, and manipulated people, would surrender himself just because he wanted to make sure Will would always know where he was? In spite of how much he wanted to kill Hannibal, here he was, in an absurd twist of fate, having escaped with the same man.

And in the same twisted way, having fallen in love with him, too.

Fate must be laughing right now.

Will wondered if he had a chance to go back, if he could somehow get that life back with his precious dogs. The answer to that was fairly obvious, yet it didn't stop him from considering the idea. If he ran away with Hannibal, he'd probably run for the rest of his life.

Would it be worth it?

He also couldn't dismiss the fact that he found himself after he found Hannibal. He had told Chiyoh he knew himself better around him.

He closed his eyes and could vividly remember Hannibal's voice back at the cliff house, laced with a kind of fear that was uncharacteristic of him.

Thirty minutes passed, then an hour, which became three hours. Will glanced at the clock, concerned, wondering what was taking him so long.

Just then, the door opened, and Lecter entered, holding a brown paper bag.

"Where were you?" Will asked, rising from the sofa.

"Grabbed some beef," Hannibal replied.

"It took you three hours?"

"I apologize. Took a little detour and got us some wine."

Hannibal removed his jacket, and hung it on a chair, then set the bag down on the kitchen counter. The beef was wrapped in brown wrapping paper. Will unwrapped it and cocked his head as he looked at the 'steak'. It didn't take him long to guess where Hannibal might've been in the past few hours.

"What are we having for dinner?" he asked.

"Nothing too elaborate, unlike my other recipes," Hannibal replied. "*Entrecôte*. It's French for a boneless rib-eye steak cut from between the ribs. Makes it great for quick cooking."

Will hummed. "So did you do it?"

"Do what?"

“Cut *him* from between the ribs?”

Hannibal looked up at him, at the subtle hint of a smile on Will's face that showed nothing escaped him. Will had spent a lot of time around him to know everything.

Hannibal smiled back. “I could never get away with lying to you. Not for too long, at least.”

It didn’t make sense to Will that Hannibal killed a man just because the man hurt him. He wouldn’t normally care. He shouldn’t. Hell, he even tried to hurt Will himself in the past. *So, why?* Hannibal stood up for Will when he usually wouldn’t, and it wouldn’t be the first time either. He stood up for him against the Dragon too. He never had to do any of those things.

Something had shifted in him, and Will wasn’t used to this… change. His mind was racing, searching for answers. He wanted to know what his intentions were.

“If I’m not mistaken, Dr. Lecter,” he said, “It’s been thrice so far that you’ve displayed your… concern for me.”

“You say that like I’m incapable of feeling anything.”

“It just catches me off guard.”

Hannibal heated some butter on a pan. “As bizarre as it is to believe, I do have emotions. I’ve simply practiced keeping them in control for the most part.”

“I saw rage in your eyes when you stopped Michael Benson from hurting me. Was that losing control?”

Hannibal’s lack of response said everything. It was crystal clear. His principles, his ideals and his forbearance didn’t work around Will, and it often took him by surprise as well. Will was a grey area. An exception. Someone who was capable of forcing emotions out of him without trying. Usually, it would piss him off if someone tapped into his weaknesses, but with Will, he willingly let himself open.

“You should’ve left me at the cliff,” Will added.

“I told you I wouldn’t abandon you,” Hannibal said, frying the beef in the pan. “I made a promise.”

“I never asked you to.”

“I made a promise to myself.”

Will paused, unable to believe this side of him. “You took a huge risk.”

“And for you, I would do it again.” There was no hesitation in his voice.

“Why?”

“Something tells me you already know the answer to that.”

He did, but Will wanted to hear it from him. It would make it concrete. He didn't want to prod further at the moment, though.

"Did the… *meat* put up a fight like he did with me?" he asked.

"He didn't see me coming," Hannibal replied.

Will imagined him stealing through the night, stalking the victim, murdering him in the most brutal way possible, then cutting him apart and carving out a piece of his flesh.

He moved a little closer to Hannibal. "So let me get this straight—you're cooking that man for dinner because he hurt me?"

"He crossed the line."

Explains why he wanted to know his name.

"I'm not sure how to respond," Will replied.

Once the steak was done, Hannibal prepared red wine sauce, and Will stood by, watching him cook. He had watched him cook a dozen times before, but never actually paid attention because his head would usually be filled with murders and his own crazy psyche. Now that he truly had his focus for the first time, everything Hannibal did seemed fascinating, to say the least. It was satisfying watching him cook with finesse, even in a cabin in the woods.

Hannibal took some of the freshly prepared sauce on the spoon and blew on it.

"Try the sauce," he said, reaching the spoon out to him.

Will tasted it, his eyes fixed on him, then licked his lips in as alluring a way he could.

"It's delicious," he said.

Hannibal's gaze flitted to his lips, then back to his eyes. The spark of desire he had felt back at the store when Will kissed him still simmered in the pit of his stomach. It took a monumental amount of self-control to hold himself back, which he had. He'd been doing that for a long time.

Although he didn't know if he could do it for *too* long.

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Will didn't realize the hour go by, spent in conversations in front of the fireplace. They spoke about the FBI, and then shifted to past murder cases, and then the mention of Alana Bloom came in somewhere, which made Will uncomfortable.

"I can't seem to wrap my head around that little… affair, of sorts," he said, sipping on the last bit of wine.

"I would hardly call it an affair. She was merely an alibi. Effective one at that."

Will bobbed his eyebrows. “I’ll bet.”

“Trust me, I haven’t expressed the same sentiments to anyone else as I do with you. With you, it’s…” Hannibal paused. “Real.”

“That word sounds foreign coming from you.”

Will stared at him for a moment, watching the orange glow of the fire on his face, the glimmer in his eyes. The look of contemplation in them made him wonder what he was thinking.

“Tell me, Will,” said Hannibal. “If the circumstances were different right now, and you were working with the FBI to hunt me down, how would you do it?”

“Hypothetically?”

Hannibal shrugged.

“I was with you when Dolarhyde was killed, and assuming you left me and ran,” Will said. “I’d know you left that police car to mislead us. I know you. You could’ve taken any route to escape, so… I don’t know, I suppose witness accounts might help narrow it down. You can’t help your urges, so you’re bound to give something away. You just killed a man here. That would attract attention.”

Will’s brain wasn’t functioning as it usually did when he was helping the FBI out. He didn’t know if he should blame it on the wine or on Lecter.

“Hm,” Hannibal said.

“You want to know the short version of how I’d find you?" Will said. "You’d tell me yourself. Leave me a clue.”

“I would.”

“We’ve been here for two days. If I was hunting you, two days is plenty. By now, I imagine I’d be on your tail.”

“If *you* were on my tail, it would give me several hours at best.”

“Depends. This isn’t entirely hypothetical, is it?”

Hannibal gave a smile. “I was just curious to know how the FBI would go about it.”

Of course he does. “They are more resourceful than you think. Don’t underestimate their ability to lure you out by any means necessary. Even if it means using Freddie Lounds. Did anyone see you when you killed Michael Benson?”

“No.”

“Are you sure?”

Hannibal's brows furrowed. "There was a man in the distance. Ran off before I could catch up to him."

"Did he see your face?"

"I doubt it. He could've seen the car though."

"Did you see his face?"

"He was far off."

Hannibal finished the wine and stood, keeping the glass on the table as he went into the bedroom. Will did the same before following him.

"I suppose you've made up your mind, then," Hannibal said, taking off his grey shirt and checking his bandages.

Will eyed his back muscles for a moment before averting his gaze. He cleared his throat. "Not much room to decide anything when there's only one option."

Hannibal removed the bandage and checked his sutures. He cleaned the area before taking a fresh bandage from the nightstand.

Will walked up to him and helped with taping the bandage, making sure it stayed in place.

"Whatever the outcome," Hannibal smiled. "I am glad you are here, Will."

Will met his gaze. Hannibal's suppressed desire had reached a fever pitch, so much so his fingers twitched with the need to touch him. He reached a hand to hold his face, stroking his cheekbone with his thumb, feeling his stubbly skin scratch his palm, his soft curls between his fingers. Will drew in a soft breath, the empath in him feeling what Hannibal felt, simply by the way he touched.

"You've denied me this for far too long," he said. "I can't hold back anymore."

Will's heart and mind were in chaos, jumbled together into something incomprehensible. He couldn't think straight, being this close to him. His stomach fluttered, and his breath shallowed.

"I'm…" he said, "Kind of a mess. My bandages might deter you."

"Nothing deters me from what I want," Hannibal replied.

His lips drew closer until they molded into Will's. Hannibal threaded his fingers in his hair at the back of his head, holding him in place as he kissed deeper, sliding his tongue into his mouth.

Will clasped his body, feeling his warmth. The kiss unlocked something deep down inside him, bringing it to the surface.

A want. A craving.

In the whirlwind of emotions inside him, desire was the one he felt most strongly. It was too overwhelming to be ignored.

Hannibal broke contact, but his mouth remained a hair’s breadth away from Will's. Their noses brushed as he unbuttoned Will's blue plaid shirt. Will unfastened the last few buttons and Hannibal pushed the shirt over his shoulder. Hannibal kissed him again with twice the fervor, and a bit of urgency. From there, he trailed along his unharmed cheek before dropping kisses along the column of his neck. He got rid of Will’s shirt, dropping it to the floor.

Will craned his neck with a gasp. The tingling he felt before when Hannibal touched him multiplied exponentially. It wasn’t just a tingle here. His body ached, and was practically on fire. Hannibal’s hands were everywhere, fondling and caressing his body, sending a shiver through him, and leaving goosebumps on his skin. Hannibal was careful about his bandages, not wanting to hurt him.

Will unbuttoned his jeans and pushed them down, along with his boxers, kicking them aside. He had done this before with women, but none of them had felt as fulfilling and euphoric as this.

This, whatever it was, he wanted more. *So much more.*

I Will Possess Your Heart

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal stopped kissing for a moment to take Will in, head to toe. It was almost surreal, having him like this, bared body and soul. He might've imagined this moment often, but none of that came close to the real thing.

If anything could be deemed beautiful, it had to be this. Him.

Hannibal was so lost in the sight of him, it caught him off guard when Will pulled him into another kiss, arms coiling around him, clutching him close. Every inch of their skin pressed against each other.

They moved to the bed, and Will lay on it, wincing a little as he shifted up to the pillow. His injuries proved to be the biggest inconvenience in a time like this. Hannibal gave him a peck on his lips before trailing kisses down his body. Every kiss was like a brand, an invisible mark he wanted to leave all over him, so that he was his and his alone.

Will arched his chest, exhaling sharp breaths. His blood heated, his heart pounding in his ears. His mouth ran dry. Hannibal knew what he was doing, knew where to touch, where to kiss. He eyed Will as he dragged his lips along his inner thighs, further and further in. And when he finally reached his hard, aching cock, he ran his tongue along its length, sending electricity coursing through Will's body. Hannibal pushed him over the edge when he took his cock into his mouth.

A loud moan tore through Will's lips, and his fingers clenched Hannibal's silvery hair. "Oh, God, Hannibal."

He glanced down to see his head bobbing, his mouth hot and the suction greedy. The pressure built inside his shaft and his back almost lifted off the bed. It was a whole new level of sensations he never felt with anyone else before, and it made him wonder why he didn't give in to this a long time ago.

Maybe he should've followed his heart a long time ago.

Better late than never.

Hannibal took his mouth off his cock a little too early. Will couldn't even express his disappointment at that, not when his mind was out of control. Hannibal kissed his way up until his face hovered inches above Will's. His body was hot, burning like a furnace. The tension between them was palpable. For a moment, they stared at each other in silence, not needing to say anything. Everything was laid bare in front of them, in every sense of the word.

Hannibal ran his fingers along Will's jawline, his thumb stroking his chin, tracing his lips. He stared at the deep blue of his eyes, like the hues of the ocean, still struggling to believe all this was real. The fact he could touch him was the only proof that he wasn't hallucinating. He lost track of how long he had waited for this. Ages, maybe.

He sealed Will's mouth with another ardent kiss before thrusting into him.

"Ah!" Will moaned at the penetration, his mouth dropping and his neck craning up.

Hannibal was so thick and full inside him he could barely stand it. He dug his fingers into his back as Hannibal rocked him on the bed, while being cautious about both their injuries. Will bucked under him, taking him in deeper, clenching around him. Hannibal grunted softly at the tight fit.

Everything that led up to this moment, seemed to have been—in some bizarre way—worth it, and any animosity he might've felt towards Hannibal had gradually faded. Nothing mattered anymore. All this time, he wasn't sure if he trusted Hannibal enough to run away with him. Now, in giving himself up to him, he had subconsciously made a decision.

At the sight of his gaping mouth, Hannibal's own mouth fell open, his eyes registering Will's every response. The look in his eyes, the sounds he made, spurred him on. He gently nipped his neck before flicking his tongue over it. With each thrust, he delved deeper inside him.

Moving off him, Hannibal sat up on the bed, and helped Will to sit up too. As he stretched his legs out in front of him, Will straddled his lap, positioning himself over his cock before lowering himself. He exhaled a sharp breath, feeling the fullness again. *Too full. Too deep.* And then his hips moved. He formed a fist in Hannibal's hair, clutching him tightly as the ache grew stronger. His low whimpers sounded near Hannibal's ear.

Hannibal ran his hands up his body, squeezing his pec briefly before rubbing his nipple with his thumb. Teasing it. Will's skin felt so smooth and warm under his fingers. He never realized how incredibly touch-starved he was until Will kissed him on that cliff before hugging him.

To get to touch him, feel him, savor him now was everything he craved, and more. He wanted to hold him close for eternity.

Will clasped his head and kissed him vehemently, in between heavy breaths. His lips crushed his, as if trying to flatten them. Hannibal returned it with twice the intensity. Reaching down, he wrapped his fingers around Will's throbbing, aching cock and stroked it. Will picked up pace, riding him faster. The pleasure peaked, and their bodies tensed. They were on the precipice together, about to take a leap. And they did.

Hannibal grasped his hips with one hand, but not guiding his movements.

"Will," he groaned softly.

In that moment where the only sounds in that room were their moans and heavy breaths, that was the only desperate word that slipped out of his mouth.

Will shuddered, dropping his head back and letting out a thready cry as he came hard. Hannibal bound one arm around his body, hugging him as he joined him. The pleasure ebbed and flowed. He stroked Will's flushed, slick cock with his other hand, milking him dry.

Relief took over, and they went lax. Will buried his face in the other's shoulder.

Hannibal hugged him, face pressed against his shoulder too. He held him for a while, eyes closed in absolute serenity, taking in his warmth. He let his hands caress and worship Will's skin.

All the past moments they spent together, which he deemed were the 'best memories', all paled in comparison to this. Because this was complete, unadulterated bliss.

This would be the best memory.

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Will stayed like that, taking the time to pull himself together. He parted from the hug afterwards, to face Hannibal. There was a tenderness in the way Hannibal's amber eyes looked up at him, like he had surrendered himself to him. Like he would do anything for him. Will brought a hand to caress his cheek and Hannibal leaned into his palm. Will couldn't comprehend how the man could feel so strongly about him. *Why him?* Every display of affection he showed towards him was like kryptonite. It brought out Hannibal's vulnerability, which never usually reveals itself. Ever.

This *amour fou* was unfathomable.

Will thought he had given himself up to him, when in reality, it was the other way around. It drove him to finally accept his feelings. He kissed him again, with the same tenderness the man showed him, to let him know his feelings were mutual.

Slowly moving off him, he lay on the bed, resting his head on the pillow. Right now, the dull ache of his wounds didn't bother him. Hannibal settled next to him, lying on his side so he could simply gaze at him. He loved all of him, but Will's face and his soft, dark curls were his favorite things to touch. Will turned his head to look at him. Hannibal stroked his cheek, then played with his hair.

Sweat glistened on their bodies. Their hearts thrashed in their chests, frenzied beats syncing with each other.

"I was not expecting that," Will panted.

"Yes, you were," Hannibal said, breathy. "You just weren't fully prepared for it."

"You certainly were."

This intimacy was distracting and overwhelming. Will wanted to kiss him again, kiss him forever. Mold into him so they were one. Then again, perhaps they already were.

"It makes me happy you see things clearly now," Hannibal said. "You understand."

“I do,” Will replied. *I see and feel them all clearly.* “Confessions of love aren’t your thing, are they?” The corners of his lips turned up in that playful smirk he always gave. The one that turned Hannibal on. “Would it sound banal if I said those words to you?”

“Do you think of them that way?”

Will exhaled slowly. "I think they’re an inevitable truth I’d been denying all along."

“The truth is never banal.”

“It's never easy. I worry you'd take it for granted.”

“I never took you for granted. Not once.”

Truth be told, Will was stalling, secretly building the courage to tell those words to him. They were the only things he could never say with the same boldness as he said everything else.

“What is the truth?” Hannibal asked.

“I am… in love with you.”

He fell silent, letting that sink in. It definitely sunk all the way in, judging by Hannibal’s content smile. It was amazing how one simple expression spoke more than what he could put into words.

“You?” Will asked.

“I think you know how I feel. How I’ve always felt.”

“I want to hear it from you.”

Another moment of silence. Will wondered if he would ever say it back.

“I love you too, Will,” Hannibal said, tenderly, his breath fanning lightly over the other's face.

Will had to admit those words gave him a special kind of high. “So… gutting me like a fish that day was an act of love?”

“You gave me no choice.”

Will huffed. “Please. What about manipulating me? Framing me?”

“I'd say that's in the past, wouldn't you? Besides, you’ve had your fair share of getting back at me."

Touché. “My point is, how do I know you won’t try those things again? When situations go bad?”

“I am sorry for this.” Hannibal ran a hand over the scar across Will’s stomach. “But I have no reason to hurt you anymore. There’s no situation that would compel me to.”

It sounded unconvincing. Amusing, even. But there was no hesitation in Hannibal's eyes. Nothing that said he was lying. They held the utmost conviction about what he said, which surprised Will. It was a stark contrast from the man who wouldn't flinch from butchering a human being and eating them, the one who possessed a knack for getting into people's heads.

"Are you sure about that?"

"In spite of everything, I trusted you," Hannibal replied. "Trust goes both ways."

No matter how hard the two of them tried, they could never be without each other. Didn't matter if they admitted it or not. Only time would tell if Hannibal kept true to his words.

"Inevitability," Will murmured. "I'd said it before. We have begun to blur."

"You also wondered if either of us would survive separation." Hannibal felt the veins in Will's arm before pressing a kiss to his bicep. "Would you survive?"

"You first. If we're being honest, then I want to hear you say the things you wouldn't say explicitly." Will shifted to his side, snuggling near him. He knew how it impacted him when he was this close, and he wanted to take advantage of it to coax the truth out of him. "Would you survive without me?"

"I wouldn't wait too long to find out. I wouldn't want to experience that. You know I'd find you anywhere, and I would never let you go."

"So, that's a no."

"It goes without saying. And you?"

"You don't give me a chance to find out."

"I'll take that as a no, too."

Moments like these were rare. Moments of transparency and candor. Jack Crawford and the entirety of the FBI were most likely looking for them, might even track them here sooner or later, but that wasn't of any concern to Will. He was convinced Hannibal would figure something out. He also knew if they were ever caught, he'd refuse to be separated from him again.

Now that he'd chosen his path, a part of him wondered if things would somehow change in the long run. There was no stopping Hannibal from growing tired of him and moving on to another object of desire. He wondered if he'd be able to endure it if that happened.

"Nobody can tell what might transpire in the future," he said. "Who's to say you won't move on to someone else? Someone better than me."

"There's always someone better, but no one like you. There never will be. I'm certain my feelings for you will never waver."

Somehow that made Will feel better. "Didn't expect this from you."

“You told me to be explicit.”

“I did. I like it.”

Will turned to lie on his back again. Hannibal shifted, leaning partly over him, taking his lips in a deep kiss.

“You might grow tired of me someday,” Will whispered.

“My convictions are stronger than you think," Hannibal said. "If me abandoning you is your biggest concern, then I can promise you—ten years, twenty years, doesn’t matter how much time flies by. It’s always going to be you.”

"Why? I never thought you'd care so much about anyone."

There was no response.

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Hannibal thought he knew the answer, thought he understood why, but he didn't. It was hard to put into words. All he was certain of was that his feelings for Will were unlike anything he'd ever feel for anyone else, and he didn't want to lose that. *He loved him.* It was all he needed to know.

He settled beside him again as Will closed his tired eyes, draping the blanket over them, making sure he was warm.

He watched him sleep, knowing everything he wanted was right in front of him.

...

Hannibal awoke early the next morning, and spent a few minutes gazing at his lover beside him, watching his chest heave with slow breaths. He wished he could stay like that longer. Unfortunately, they had to move. So, he had to prepare.

The blanket had slid down to Will’s stomach. Hannibal gently drew it back up to his chest. He got off the bed and put his clothes on. Taking one last look at his beloved, he walked out of the room.

...

Hannibal picked up some medicines and bandages from a pharmacy before heading to the convenience store to buy some food for the road—sandwiches, drinks, among many others.

He placed the items on the counter, and the cashier punched them in the computer. Cops must’ve discovered the murder by now, though it would take time before they narrow down the suspect. Enough time for him to escape town. The only thing that bothered him was the man he saw last night, the one who witnessed the murder. He might not have seen Hannibal’s face, but it wouldn’t stop him from telling the cops. Maybe give them some vague description.

It was a shame he ran away before Hannibal could catch up to him.

Lecter's eyes flitted to the small TV mounted on the wall, its volume turned down low. The news channel was on.

At the sight of the report, he stilled.

'Chesapeake Ripper on the loose'

His face was plastered on the screen. FBI were on the hunt for the Ripper—who had escaped prison—and Will Graham, the fugitive who helped him escape.

Hannibal's gaze darted to the cashier, whose back was turned to the TV. He glanced outside and spotted cops standing there a short distance away.

Shit.

He had no clue how far this news had spread. If the policemen outside knew, they would catch him the second he stepped out.

He kept eyeing the cashier, thinking of ways to kill him quickly if he turned around to the TV, without attracting the attention of the cops. It would be near impossible, though the alternative would be the cashier alerting the policemen.

Will was right. The FBI sure were resourceful. Jack must be desperate.

Thankfully, the cashier didn't turn around. Hannibal paid him, bagged the items and walked out of the store as casually as he'd entered. He walked past the cops who paid no heed to him, and continued walking to his car. He heard one of the cops talking into his walkie.

"Nah," the cop said. "Witness gave a vague description of the murderer. Not much to go on, except for the car he described."

A voice sounded from the walkie. 'What does it look like?'

"He said it was a grey Nissan Sentra," the cop replied. "Has a black bumper."

Hannibal picked up pace, reaching his car. If he had to escape town, he had to do it now. There was no more time left.

***

Will stirred, instinctively reaching a hand out to his side, hoping to feel Hannibal lying there. Instead, his fingers caught the creased sheets. His eyes opened, coming to focus on the empty space next to him. His mind came back to the depressing reality that they were on the run, so this comfort was temporary. He sat up, throwing the blanket aside and putting his clothes on. It took him a few minutes to get freshened up before going into the kitchen. Hannibal was nowhere to be seen. Breakfast was kept covered on the table with a note on it, the words written in beautiful cursive.

'I'm going to town to grab some supplies. I'll be back in an hour. Enjoy the breakfast.

- Hannibal'

Will lifted the plate covering the breakfast, which was eggs and bacon. He sat down to eat. He merely took a bite of the bacon when someone knocked on the door.

Hannibal didn't need to knock.

On the way to the door, he caught sight of two cops from the window. Their car was parked nearby. Unease churned in Will's stomach. The little voice in him told him something was wrong. *What if this was about the murder?*

He put on a poker face and opened the door. "Can I help you?"

"Are you here on holiday, sir?" one of them asked.

Go with the flow. "Yes, I am."

"How long have you been here?"

"About two days."

The second officer looked to his right, as if staring at something next to the cabin.

"Is something wrong?" Will asked.

"Is that your car, sir?" the officer pointed to where he'd been looking.

Will stepped out and peeked around the corner of the cabin to see the Nissan sitting there. His brows pulled together. If the car was here, then…

"Sir?" the officer said.

"Uh, yeah," Will blurted.

The cops looked at each other, then eyed him suspiciously.

"What's your name?" one asked.

"Jack." Will paused briefly. "Benson." *The first thing that popped into his head.*

"Mr. Benson, where were you last night at around ten?"

The apprehension in Will grew, yet he forced himself to stay calm. "I was here in the cabin. I'm sorry, what is this about?"

"A man was murdered last night. He was butchered, and his body carved out. A witness claims to have seen your car at the scene."

"That's ridiculous."

“What’s more ridiculous is that a car matching the description of your vehicle was reported stolen four days ago.”

“I don’t know what you’re getting at, officer, but I’m afraid you have the wrong person.”

“I guess we have to make sure,” said the second cop. “You don’t mind if we search the cabin, do you?”

“Go ahead,” Will replied.

While one cop searched the cabin, he gestured to his buddy to search the car. Will glanced around, hoping to spot Hannibal lurking around somewhere. He went back inside the cabin, where the officer looked around the living room, then walked into the bedroom.

“You came here alone, Mr. Benson?” the officer asked.

“Yeah,” Will replied, not wanting to mention Hannibal. “Wanted to get away from the noise.”

“I’ll bet.”

The casual demeanor of the cop spelled trouble. Nervousness crept in, slightly at first, then growing as he watched the officer scour the rooms, searching high and low for something. That was when his fellow officer stepped inside with a couple of papers.

“Didn’t find much in the car other than this medical bill, in the name of Ronald Sutton." He cocked his head at Will. “I don’t suppose that’s a pseudonym.”

It frustrated Will that he couldn’t come up with a proper lie, especially when his mind kept wondering where the fucking hell Hannibal was.

The first cop came out of the kitchen to join his buddy. “Sir, if you would come down to the station with us. We’d like to ask you a few more questions.”

“There’s been a misunderstanding,” Will said.

“Maybe. We can confirm that at the station.”

At the pretense of rubbing his forehead, Will stole a furtive glance at his surroundings, trying to find a weapon. Something. He couldn’t go into the kitchen to get the knife. Even if he did, it would be stupid to bring a knife to a gunfight. The cops were wary of him too, judging from the way their fingers brushed the handles of their sidearms.

“Let me get my jacket,” he said, and went into the bedroom.

One of them followed close behind. Will didn’t even have a phone. Damn it. There was no way to escape without the risk of getting wounded or killed. He put on his jacket and followed the policemen outside. The sight of that Nissan gave him the worst thoughts.

Hannibal still hadn't shown up, which made him doubt his intentions, his words and promises. He wondered if any of it was true. This wouldn't be the first time Hannibal betrayed him, but Will thought he wouldn't do that again. For the first time in a long time, he chose to trust him.

Was it all a lie?

Along with doubt came a tinge of pain, and he shut his eyes for a moment.

There were hurried footsteps behind them. Will opened his eyes only to see Hannibal clamp a hand over the cop's mouth and slit his throat with a knife. The cop's eyes bulged, and he choked and spluttered, blood spewing from his throat. Just as the other cop scrambled for his sidearm, Hannibal closed the gap within a second, plunging the knife deep into his gut. He pulled it out only to stab the cop in the neck. The officer's hands trembled as they reached for the knife, but couldn't pull it out.

The policemen collapsed. Blood pooled out from under their bodies.

Hannibal stood there, silver strands of hair falling down his forehead, blood spattered on his face. It stained his shirt and hands. One minute, he made Will believe he had left him, then suddenly appeared and brutally murdered the cops. Will had no clue how to react.

"Told you," Hannibal said. "I'd never abandon you. I always keep my promises."

Will sighed softly. He did regret doubting him, and at the same time, wanted to punch him in the face for scaring the shit out of him like that.

"Yeah, well, maybe next time, make an early appearance?" he said. "Looks like you were right. Your mystery witness from last night identified the car. Not you. So, they suspected me."

"You didn't give me away."

Will shrugged. "I don't think it would've made a difference. I mean, it would've ended badly if you didn't show up."

"I reached here before they did and parked the car there to lure them here."

"So, you were just hiding out and watching?"

"I was waiting for them to drop their guard. Wanted to have the element of surprise."

Will glanced down at the cops, unfazed, since seeing dead bodies was just another Tuesday for him. He felt relieved Lecter showed up in time.

Hannibal dragged the bodies into the woods before coming back out.

"I understand if you don't trust me completely yet," he said. "I have a lot to prove. Back at the cliff house, when I said this was all I wanted for us, I meant it. You said you lost the

chance to run away before. You have that chance now. I'm asking you to take a leap." He moved closer. "Run away with me."

This felt like déjà vu for some reason. Any decision Will made here would be the final call. There was no turning back from it. Not anymore. It would be the biggest decision he ever made.

Though it seemed his heart had already decided a long time ago.

"Alright," he replied.

Hannibal nodded. "Wait here."

He went back to the Nissan, opened the backseat door, and brought out a couple of plastic bags.

"What's that?" Will asked.

"Food and supplies," Hannibal replied, walking to the police car.

"Stealing another cop car. We're not even trying to be inconspicuous."

"We're not taking it the whole way," Hannibal kept the bags in the backseat of the police vehicle. "We'll ditch it just before we reach town."

"Yeah, and then maybe pick a car that's more… discreet this time?"

"If I hadn't murdered Michael Benson, none of this would've happened."

"So why did you?"

"I told you. He crossed the line."

Yeah, right. "What's the real reason? You've been putting yourself in danger for me. I don't understand what's so special about me."

"Everything. Nothing's been the same after I met you, and maybe I like it that way. I like life better with you. At the risk of sounding banal, I'd say I want you by my side always." Hannibal gave him a half-smile before going around to the driver's seat. He pushed open the passenger door from the inside. "Going my way, sweetheart?"

No more thinking. Maybe Will did need to take a leap. He shook his head and got into the car. Then they left.

"I wish I had my breakfast, at least," he said.

"I got that covered." Hannibal reached into the back seat, fished a pack of sandwiches from the plastic bag and handed them to him.

"Thanks. I'm assuming we have a long way to go, and you know where we are heading."

“Zürich. I have contacts there."

Will raised a brow. “When were you planning on telling me this?”

“When you decided to come with me. I intend to make up for lost time.”

Will took a bite of the sandwich. “What about Bedelia?”

There was a pause. “She’s aware about what’s coming for her.”

“And… Alana?”

“Her days are numbered.” Another pause. “Never thought I’d say this at a time like this. But I am happy.”

"Because you're finally free?"

"Yes, but it's not the only reason. What makes the freedom worthwhile is you."

Will smiled a little. "Feeling's mutual."

Strangely, Will felt a bit of that too. His entire life was an unfortunate series of nightmares and illnesses, dark and consuming. It was all he had ever known. If being with Hannibal gave him some form of contentment, then it was pointless running away from it.

He had to admit; the man had a hell of a gravitational pull.

Irresistible. Inescapable.

Chapter End Notes

Zürich, I know🙈 I wanted to take a different route. I've written a sequel to this: https://archiveofourown.org/works/36899326?view_full_work=true

Do check it out :)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!